

Reproduced from the Library of the Editor of
www.theSamaritanUpdate.com
Copyright 2011

**Sacred Scenes; or, Notes of Travel
in Egypt and the Holy Land**

By **Rev. Fergus Ferguson**

Thomas Adamson, 165 Cowcaddens St.
London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo

1864

Glasgow: Printed by H. Nisbet, Trongate

(p. 229) Chapter X

Nablous, or Shechem.

THE Old Testament name of Nablous is Shechem. Its history extends over a period of nearly 4000 years. When Abraham journeyed southward from Ur of the Chaldees, the first station in the land of Canaan at which he pitched his tents was "the place of Sichem," at the "oaks of Moreh." (Gen. xii. 6.) Jacob, also, on his return from Mesopotamia, settled in this fine pastoral region. He bought from Hamor, Shechem's father, that "parcel of a field" still marked by his well, and the tomb of Joseph. Although he afterwards removed to Hebron, in the south, he still retained possession of his northern property; for it was to this spot that he sent his favourite son to look for his brethren. They had removed to Dothan, ten miles northward; "and a certain man found him wandering in the field"—Jacob's field—and directed him to Dothan; thither he went, and was sold to the Ishmaelites. (Gen. xxxvii.),

After the lapse of four centuries, and when the descendants of the patriarchs, under the leadership of Joshua, had acquired their promised inheritance, Shechem became their first great gathering place. An altar was built on the top of Mount Ebal, and on it the solemn words of the decalogue were inscribed. Six of the tribes took their station there to pronounce the curse, and other six on the opposite eminence of Gerizim to pronounce the blessing. (Deut. xi. 29, 30; xxvii. 1-18; Josh. xx. 7.) During the rule (p. 230) of the Judges, it was seized by Abimelech, and there he was proclaimed king, "by the oak of the pillar." This gave occasion to the beautiful parable of Jotham, which was pronounced from the summit of Gerizim. (Judges ix.) In Shechem, Behoboam was proclaimed king over all Israel; and here, too, the ten tribes, not many days after, maddened by his folly, revolted, and chose Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, to be their own sovereign, establishing in Shechem the seat of the new monarchy. (1 Kings xii.) The dignity of capital, however, it had soon to share with the more favoured Tirzah, and finally to give up to the city of Samaria.

My reader is aware that the ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive by the Assyrians before a similar calamity befel Judah and Benjamin, and that whereas the latter were brought back to their own land, the territory occupied by the former remained desolate and uninhabited. It was, however, eventually colonised by the Assyrians themselves. The colonists found it to be so dangerously overrun by beasts of prey, that

they conceived the *local deity* to be displeased with the change of worship. They consequently despatched messengers to Jerusalem, begging to be instructed by the priests of the temple in the service of God. It is manifest, however, that, after hearing these teachers, they only made a compromise between idolatry and Judaism; for we read in the book of Kings that they feared the Lord, and served their own gods. (2 Kings xvii. 24-41.) They also received only the five books of Moses, rejecting from their Bible the other books of the Old Testament. Thus it appears that the Samaritans (for such was their origin) were not only foreigners by extraction, but merely partial proselytes. It is not very wonderful, then, that the Jews regarded them with jealousy, and that when the temple was rebuilt by Nehemiah, they were not allowed to bring to it the contribution of even a single stone.

Rejected by the Jews, they resolved to set up a rival worship and erect a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. This resolution was carried into effect B.C. 420. A deadly enmity, as might be expected, sprung up between them and the Jews, which was increased, in the course of years, by the fact that (as Josephus tells us) Samaria and its temple became the asylum and the resort of all Hebrew malcontents, political and ecclesiastic. At length the fury so increased that the edifice on Gerizim was attacked and overthrown by the Jews, under John Hyrcanus, about B.C. 149. Still they retained their worship on the top of the mountain, and, as we learn from the narrative of Christ's interview with the woman of Samaria, cherished some vague notions of the advent of the Messiah.

The name Sychar, which is found in the Gospel according to John, was in reality a nickname, given to Shechem by the Jews on account of the alleged drunkenness of the inhabitants. The town having fallen considerably into decay, was rebuilt in the time of Vespasian, and renamed *Neapolis*, that is, "new city"—a word which has run into the Arabic, Nablus, generally pronounced as a dissyllable, Nablous. This is one of the very few instances in which the ancient and scriptural name has been superseded by the modern one, imposed by the pagan conquerors of the land. I need not rehearse the subsequent history of the place. Suffice it to say, that although at one time the synagogues of the Samaritans were to be found in Egypt, and in Rome itself, they have now but one, and that in Nablous, at the base of their own sacred Gerizim. For several years their numbers have not exceeded a hundred and fifty.

The modern town contains about eight thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the watershed between the valley of the Jordan and the Mediterranean. The vale of Shechem ascends to its site and then slopes downward into a wider expanse. The minarets and roofs of the houses are thus visible, at a considerable distance, both on the western and eastern side. It is built nearer Gerizim than Ebal; for it "hugs the base" of the former, and even runs up into one of its little valleys. Nablous is a place of some importance in modern Palestine; for it is garrisoned by Turkish soldiers, whose music *regaled* us morning and evening, and it is also the seat of a prison, and of corresponding judicial authority. (p. 232) On the night of my arrival, and before the main body of our party had appeared, I wandered alone through its streets and bazaars, the former of which I found to be surprisingly filthy, and the latter surprisingly large and full. I also got a peep into the prison, where I saw three miserable malefactors sitting in chains in a damp and dark dungeon.

Besides its manufacture of soap, to which I have already referred, it is celebrated for its cotton. The olive also is very abundant in the neighbourhood, and a considerable trade is done at Nablous in the oil which is pressed from its berries.

Of its eight thousand inhabitants, only eight hundred are Christians, chiefly of the Greek church, while a hundred and fifty are Samaritans, and about fifty, Jews. All the rest are Mahommedans, and are said to be most virulent against all the three sects just named. Indeed, their animosity has repeatedly been manifested in deeds of murderous violence, for which the conniving authorities have failed to punish the criminals. The town is surrounded by gardens and orchards. Our tents were pitched among these, beyond the walls and gates, and in a position which commanded a view eastward towards Jacob's Well, and westward towards the Mediterranean.

I must now, however, give some account of our experience at this interesting place. We had intended, according to our original programme, to leave it the day after our arrival, spending an hour or two, perhaps, in the forenoon in visiting its most remarkable remains; but, as matters turned out, we were detained for three whole days. We reached Nablous on the evening of Thursday, April 17th, and we did not leave it till the morning of Monday, April 20th. The cause of our detention was, "the latter rain." This scriptural expression is used to this day by the inhabitants of the country. Rain does not fall with such frequency in the East, as in the humid regions of the West. I may observe that I purchased an umbrella on the day of my departure from Glasgow, and that, from the hour when I crossed the Straits of Dover, on the 8th of March, till the 17th of April, at Nablous, (p. 233) that piece of property remained untouched and unstained by the showers of heaven, its sole use having been, betimes, to ward off the sun's fervent rays. I had begun, indeed, to imagine that I would finish my entire oriental tour without having once seen or felt any watery drops at all; but this imagination was destined to prove illusory, and when the drops did come, they came with a vengeance. "The former rain " falls in December, and the "latter " towards the end of March. In 1862, however, the precious showers delayed their coming, the thirsty land was parched, and its inhabitants dreaded the loss of their crops. Only the week before our arrival, by order of the governor of Nablous, a day of humiliation and prayer to God, for rain, had been appointed. The Mahommedans had prayed on Mount Ebal, the Christians at Jacob's well, and the Samaritans on the summit of their own beloved Gerizim. Their supplications went up apart, but were directed towards the same God, and were presented, doubtless, by earnest hearts for the same object. The Hearer and Answerer of prayer did not disregard the cry.

I mentioned in last chapter that as my friend and I rode up the vale of Shechem, a few drops of rain fell from the clouds, which had begun to gather all around. These drops proved the earnest of the long-expected showers. The torrent did not descend, however, till midnight had passed. By that time we were asleep in our thin, and as they proved, somewhat leaky tents. We were awakened by the howling of the hurricane, and the rattling of the vehement, wind-driven rain. Presently we heard our attendants drive the pegs more firmly into the ground, which were the main support of our unsubstantial dwellings, and anon, overhead, they fastened strong ropes, intending to bind us to our anchorage, as if we had been riding in ships at sea. We could truly say, that " the storm came and the rain descended, and the wind blew and beat upon our houses, and they fell not," because they were fastened with strength and with care. Still, some of us suffered from the intrusion of the rain, although no serious injury was sustained; for it poured

through our insufficient covering, right (p. 234) upon our beds, and no refuge could be found but the partial and somewhat ignominious one of *hiding beneath the bed-clothes*. With the change of weather came also a change of temperature, for the thermometer fell from 80° to 58°, and even 50°, so that we found it necessary to fortify ourselves with the winter habiliments which had long before been lain aside. Indeed, the storm which passed over us seems to have been quite remarkable. "The oldest inhabitant" did not remember such weather at so advanced a season of the year. When we reached the Mediterranean Sea, at the close of the following week, we found that the hurricane had wrought fearful havoc there. Several ships had been cast ashore, precious lives had been lost, and shivering, shipwrecked mariners had found an asylum in the convent on Mount Carmel. As we pushed our journey northward by Tyre and Sidon we found that the coast was strewn with wrecks here and there, and that every new station had its own tale to tell of grave nautical disasters. Near Damascus the storm had descended upon a detachment of Turkish soldiers, among the elevated defiles of Anti-Lebanon, and, being unprovided for the sudden change of temperature, several of them had actually died of the cold.

In these circumstances, nothing remained for us but to content ourselves for a day or two at Nablous. It would have ill become us to complain for our comparatively unimportant detention, when the whole community were rejoicing in an answer to their prayers. I felt as I once did at a suburban district of Glasgow, on the occasion of an evening sermon. I was disposed to mourn over the storm, which had made my audience very small, when one of the office-bearers shut my mouth by saying, "Eh, sir, but this is a gran' nicht for the country!" With the aid of a charcoal-fire in the best tent, we secured for ourselves a kind of parlour accommodation by day; and it was not difficult, by additional coverings, to contend successfully with the increased cold at night. Besides, a kind Providence threw open to us the welcome hospitalities of a Christian home. One of our number bore with him an introduction to the Rev. Mr. Fleishhacker, pastor of the church in (p. 235) Nablous, in connection with the Church of England. That gentleman breakfasted with us on the morning of Friday, April 18th. It was, indeed, a peculiar occasion, for we could with difficulty hear one another speak for the howling of the wind; and the curtains of the tent flapped together, and swayed to and fro like the sails of the tempest-tossed ship. Observing our discomfort, our guest kindly invited as many of us as pleased, to sleep at his house during our detention in his neighbourhood. On three successive nights, three or four of us availed ourselves of this kind offer, and, of a truth, we found it very comfortable to have strong stone walls between us and the storm. As it was Good Friday, we accompanied our reverend friend to the church in the forenoon. We found about thirty Arabs present, and, although we could not understand the language, we were pleased to notice the promptitude and apparent devotion with which the responses were given. We also witnessed the interesting ceremony of the baptism of an Arab child. I may here observe that the mission at Nablous had been discontinued for a time, and had only recently been revived by the appointment of Mr. Fleishhacker to the station. I have no doubt that under his vigorous ministry it will go on and prosper.

In the afternoon, we sought out the church of the Samaritans, as we were anxious to see and handle the copy of the Pentateuch, in the possession of which that community boasts. We threaded our way with difficulty through a succession of streets and lanes which for filthiness exceeded any I had ever traversed. Of a truth, "the pride of Ephraim has been laid low." Whether such be the ordinary condition of the place, or whether the "latter

rain" had especially aggravated the evil, I cannot tell; but my impressions of Nablous, in this respect, were most disagreeable. At length we reached the chapel; and, although it was only an upper room, of very small dimensions indeed, and in so offensive a locality, it was so sacred in the estimation of those who occupied it (several of whom, with their high priest, had assembled to show us their curiosities) that we were compelled to "take our shoes (p. 236) from off our feet" at the door—for on no other condition could we be permitted to cross the threshold. The Samaritans, I may here observe, do not admit that their forefathers were of heathen origin, or that their worship was a mixture of Judaism and idolatry. On the contrary, they assert that they are the true Israel, that both Jews and Christians are degenerate, and that they alone wait upon God in primitive simplicity and truth. They showed us their copy of the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. They affirm that it was written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron, and that it is, therefore, nearly three thousand three hundred years old. It is a ponderous roll, tattered, patched, and stained; but neither writing nor parchment appeared to be of very great antiquity. It is kept in a cylindrical brass case, which opens upon hinges. Its peculiarities are, that it has been written in the original Hebrew character, and that, in some unimportant particulars, it differs from the generally received text. The high priest seemed to be a kind and intelligent man; but his bigoted attachment to his own little sect was truly amusing. He seemed to believe firmly that he and the hundred and fifty in Nablous who agreed with him, alone were right, and that all the world beside were wrong. He stood before us as truly the head of his own church as Pius the Ninth, on some of Rome's most gorgeous festivities, is recognised as the head of his. His little boy was at his side. He laid his hand with pride upon the flowing locks of the comely child, and said, "He will succeed me in the priesthood, and his son will succeed him. God will not want a man to stand before him." We asked him if he did not think that Christ was the Shiloh of whom Jacob spake, and the great prophet whose coming Moses predicted; but he only shook his head in unbelief. "When we observed that it was most improbable that his small and lessening community would ever convert the world, his only answer was, that "the future must be left with, God."

After leaving the synagogue, we proceeded, according to promise, to pay a visit at Mr. Fleishhacker's house. He had ridden (p. 237) out to the country to inquire into the particulars of an interesting religious work in an adjoining village, but we found his lady at home. I shall never forget the impression produced upon my mind when I passed from the forbidding streets of Nablous to the comfort and sweet seclusion of this Christian dwelling. I have sometimes felt similarly when, after a long walk on a wet and disagreeable evening, I have suddenly experienced the comfort of a bright fireside in the city of my habitation; but surrounding circumstances made the transition, in this case, all the more unexpected, and, therefore, all the more remarkable. Without, there were uncleanness and discomfort; within, there was not only cleanliness, but elegance and refinement. The chief point, however, of the contrast was this, that without there were Mahomedan hatred and unbelief, and within, Christ-like love and purity. It is a noticeable feature of all the towns and cities in Syria, that the aspect of the streets gives one no idea of the homes of the people, or their domestic life. The streets, as I have repeatedly mentioned, are all made narrow for the sake of the shade; and, generally, only a dull, windowless wall meets the eye of the traveller. You would fancy that you were walking in an uninhabited lane; but, probably, these unpretending doors which you see

here and there open into spacious courts, on every side of which commodious buildings rise, all forming one goodly dwelling, with a copious fountain of water playing in the centre. The surprise, on this occasion, however, was increased, as I have already said, by the unpromising nature of the neighbourhood; for although the worthy clergyman's house was situated in one of the best parts of Nablous, its best locality would almost have been reckoned the worst of any other town I know. We were ushered into a wide court, led up a stair, and then shown into a large and finely furnished apartment. I hope that I do not take an undue liberty with the sacredness of private life when I say that we were much interested in the appearance of the lady of the house herself. An emotion of regret, to confess the truth, first of all possessed us, that one so delicate and refined should be found in the midst (p. 238) of such dominant and degrading superstition. Her conversation, however, soon made us ashamed of having harboured any such idea for a moment. The slight German accent with which she spoke the English language only made her the more interesting; and the light of Christian holiness beamed from her countenance, She had left all the attractions of her native Heidelberg, and had devoted herself to the self-sacrificing duties of a missionary's- wife in an oriental climate, and among hostile men. When we asked her if she did not feel the want of society, she meekly answered, in a tone which almost rebuked the question—" Oh, no, my husband's society is enough for me. We are here at the post of duty, and in the service of God. My little child, and the duties of my household, fully occupy my time." All this patience and joy in cross-bearing were manifested thus richly, although she had been a martyr to fever and other diseases ever since coming to the country, and was only now able, with a shattered constitution, to undertake a limited amount of labour. She was, without doubt, a true helpmeet; and it was plain, at a glance, that such a woman, even in that moral desert, could throw such a charm around home, and so support her husband's spirit by her zeal amid his many discouragements, that her society would be as compensatory to him for all other privations as his society was to her. I felt, as I left that model home, that of a truth there was a Holy Ghost, who makes his indwelling manifest by the beamings and radiations of the expressive countenance, as well as by the words of the mouth and the actions of the life. I rejoiced that I had seen the bright side of the cloud as well as the dark—" the sunny side' as well as "the shady side"—and was persuaded that the eyes of the Saviour must rest with satisfaction from day to day upon the scene which I had witnessed, and that this was but a sample of the self-denial and self-sacrifice exhibited in the lives of missionaries and ministers, with their partners and families, all over the world, which He will reward with his welcome, and "well done," when the days of tribulation shall be ended.

Next morning we fully expected to leave Nablous. The rain, (p. 239) I should have observed, did not fall incessantly on the day before; but as soon as one dark cloud had discharged its liquid treasure, another was manifestly preparing itself on the same beneficent mission. We thought that the storm had now spent its fury; and as the sun shone out cheerily, the order was given that the tents should be struck. But even when the work of demolition was progressing, the clouds arose so angrily from the Great Sea on the west (or rather so lovingly, considering the circumstances of the country—the darkness of their frown, being, in truth, but the brightness of their smile), that the order, when half executed, was countermanded. All the forenoon we occupied the uncomfortable, but we could not confess the blameworthy position of those " who halt

between two opinions;" for the uncertainty of the weather produced the uncertainty of our wills. At length the day advanced so far, and the sky still remained so dubious, that we abandoned all thoughts of advance, and made up our minds to spend a quiet Sabbath in the valley of Shechem, expecting a blessing at the foot of the mount of blessing. The decision was a prudent one; for the storm so increased towards the afternoon, that had we been caught in it, the exposure would have been attended not only with discomfort, but with positive danger.

As it was, we did not escape without a thorough ducking. During one of the fair blinks of sunshine in the afternoon, we resolved to improve our time by making the ascent of Mount Gerizim. Ordering out our horses, we started boldly on the expedition. We found the sides of the hill steep and slippery; but what incommoded us most was the fact that "the clouds returned after the rain." A darkness, well nigh Egyptian, enveloped us, and then a shower that seemed to exceed all its predecessors in vehemence and abundance came down. It was bad enough half way up; but, as was to be expected, *the climax came at the top*. Being as well wetted as we possibly could be, we determined not to return without having seen the spot which has been so long held sacred by the Samaritans. Having reached the highest ridge of the mountain, we observed, at the distance of (p. 240) about half a mile along the level summit, a ruinous tower, which as our guide informed us, marked the holy spot. When, after a ride of another quarter of an hour, we had reached this goal, the rain had happily cleared away, and the strong wind which blew began rapidly to dry our dripping garments. The first object of interest to which we came was a shallow pit, containing ashes and calcined bones, the remains of the Passover lambs which had been burned with fire on the evening of the preceding Monday. The Prince of Wales and his suite had witnessed this annual ceremony. The Samaritans, according to their custom, had encamped on the mountain, sacrificed seven lambs at sunset, and remained all night. Mr. Fleishhacker had been present, and had described to us the scene on the day before. The high priest read the beginning of the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus to the sixth verse, which runs thus—" And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." Whenever that word, " Shachatu," (shall kill it) was uttered, the lambs were most dexterously and noiselessly slaughtered. Then they were roasted over a fire kindled in a deep pit hard by, in compliance with the divine requirement in the same context—" Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire." (v. 9.) The lambs thus cooked, the Samaritans—men, women, and children—ate on the mountain-top, as if in haste. In this respect, also, they abide by the letter of the statute already quoted—" And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover." (v. 11.) You will thus see that the Samaritans keep the Passover exactly as the Jews used to do, with this difference, that they observe it beneath the lofty canopy of heaven, and on the time-honoured mountain-top—circumstances which doubtless render their ceremonial somewhat romantic and imposing. Our intelligent informant told us that the exhibition did not please him. He could not help thinking of the priests of Baal, who vainly cut themselves (p. 241) with knives on the summit of Carmel, and he could not get rid of the conviction that the gesticulations and intonations of the chief actors in the scene were much more vehement and sanctimonious than usual, and all for the sake of making an impression on the mind of the royal spectator. The Prince and his

suite left about nine P.M.; but Dr Stanley, anxious to see the end of the performance, stayed all night on the mountain-top. I was about to say that he slept all night there; but I fear that the facts of the case will not warrant the use of the word; for, according to his own confession, he became acquainted on that occasion with the insects as well as the institutions of the Samaritans.

About a hundred yards eastward of this place of sacrifice, we reached the ancient ruin which occupies the very highest point on the hill, and can be seen at a great distance throughout the surrounding region. Many travellers have supposed it to be the remains of the ancient Samaritan temple; but, according to competent witnesses, the style of architecture, in as far as can be traced, is Roman. It is generally acknowledged now to indicate the site of the fortress built by the Emperor Justinian to protect against the attacks of the Samaritans the church which he had erected on Gerizim, in honour of the Virgin Mary. At the distance of about a stone-throw southward from the ruin, and still on the wind-swept summit of the hill, is to be found the Samaritan "Holy of Holies." "This is a smooth surface of natural rock, of an irregular oval shape, 45 feet in diameter, declining gently towards a rough rock-hewn pit on its west side." Towards this shrine the Samaritans always turn when they pray, and on approaching it, they invariably take off their shoes. Around the rock are traces of walls evidently more ancient than those of the castle, as we may judge from the massive stones which remain. Here, in all probability, stood the ancient Samaritan temple, and on this sacred ledge of rock the Samaritans have worshipped ever since the temple was destroyed. The view from the top of Gerizim is very fine on a clear day. North, south, east, and west, the eye wanders over a wide extent of mountain scenery. The (p. 242) cloudiness of the day, however, rendered our view limited. We could see, nevertheless, the rich plains and valleys couched among the mountains of Ephraim, which made "Joseph like a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by the spring whose branches run over the wall." (Gen. xlix. 22.) Although the snowy heights of Hermon were invisible on the north, we could descry the white foam of the Mediterranean on the west, struggling into view, as I remember once to have observed from the summit of Ben-Lomond the waters of the Frith of Forth dimly visible under overhanging clouds. I may here notice that the Samaritans themselves, and the inhabitants of Nablous in general, in pronouncing the word Gerizim, lay the emphasis on the second syllable.

We made our descent about half-way down the Vale of Shechem, below the town. In so doing I had a good opportunity of observing the position of Ebal, on the other side. Here two spurs of the two mountains advance to meet one another, leaving a distance of only about sixty yards between. It was plain that the sacred writers would have been guilty of no extravagance if they had represented the words uttered on Ebal as audible on Gerizim, and *vice versa*, on the supposition that the speakers stood on these projecting eminences. Indeed, a conversation could be carried on much further up the hill, as I judged from the trial which I made in descending. My voice seemed easily to extend across the intervening space, and echo gave it faithfully back again from the sombre slopes of the hill of cursing. But, in truth, it does not seem necessary to suppose that the tribes on the one hill heard what was said by a speaker or speakers on the other. The account in the book of Joshua of the solemn and typical service is brief, but graphic and impressive :—"And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the

Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And (p. 243) afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." (Josh. viii. 33, 84.) The tribes had thus been separated to the work of blessing or cursing by Moses: "These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse, Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; and the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed be the man," &c. (Deut. xxvii. 12-14.) From a comparison of these passages, it does not appear that the two parties stood on the summits of the two hills. The requirements both of the ordinance of Moses and the narrative in Joshua, will be met, if we suppose that the Captain of the host with the Levites, stood by the ark of the Lord in the middle of the valley, while the separated bands were drawn up on the lower slopes of Ebal and Gerizim. Joshua, or the Levites, at his command, read the curses and blessings, and the tribes, on the one side and the other, repeated their assent to the malison or benison. Fancy re. peopled the glen with the enthusiastic myriads, the fatigues of their pilgrimage all forgotten in the flush of their conquests. The curses or blessings were audible as repeated by the Levites, and, after each utterance, like the shout of warriors, or the roar of ocean, rose from the mighty mass on the one side or the other, the unanimous "Amen!" Then the important reflection came: May we all at last be among the blessed, and not among the cursed! These hills confronting one another rose up before us as emblems of righteousness and unrighteousness, opposite in probation here, and opposite in fruition hereafter; for although the dispensation be changed, the fundamental principles of religion remain the same, and not one jot or tittle of God's law has passed, or can ever pass away.

(p. 245) On Sabbath, April 20th (Easter Sunday),

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

These references are not listed in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, **The Scarecrow Press, Inc.** Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

The visit was in 1862.